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THE WAR AND THE  
BRITISH DOMINIONS

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## THE WAR AND THE BRITISH DOMINIONS

CONSIDERING that, upon the cynical violation of Belgian neutrality, the whole British Empire rallied to the support of the mother country with a unanimity perhaps without precedent, it may seem superfluous, and indeed almost impertinent, to justify by argument conclusions which a swift intuition has already reached. At the same time, fluctuations of opinion in a democracy are so frequent that it is well to guard against possible revulsions. It is a fact that many who now acclaim the necessity of Canadian intervention in a European quarrel were, quite recently, of a very different opinion. In February 1913 the Hon. C. Marcil protested in the Canadian Parliament against Canada entering upon the foreign policy of Great Britain. After quoting a list of British treaty obligations, which included the guarantee of Belgian independence and neutrality, he went on to declare that he had been elected to Parliament to deal with questions affecting Canada ; but, as for guaranteeing the neutrality of kingdoms beyond the sea, he was not prepared to enter into any policy of that kind. A short time after, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the revered leader of the Canadian Liberal Party, whilst declaring his conviction that ' War, thank heaven, is still remote ', added that ' defence, like charity, begins at home '. We know how the flood tide of Imperial patriotism at the time of the

South African War was followed by an ebb; and we shall be wise in endeavouring to prevent the possibility of any such reaction when the present crisis is past.

Nor need we quarrel with the temper that the remarks above quoted serve to illustrate. It was indeed perfectly natural that Canadian public men should desire to keep their country free from the taint of militarism and all that it implies. Many of us at home were as sincere and convinced as was Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself that the loud boasts of those who claimed for Germany a world-empire did not really represent the sober judgement of the great body of the German people, and that the kindly and genial folk with whom we came in contact would, sooner or later, be able to bring influence to bear upon the policy of their nation. We now know, however, to our immediate cost, though, we may hope, to our final salvation, that German militarism had struck deeper root in the soil of the nation than we believed, and that this is a struggle in which all who desire to end that militarism should bear their part. Throughout the Empire, men recognize that the war upon which we have entered, assuredly with no light heart, is a war of opposing principles, and therefore inevitable unless one or the other of the opposite principles should be willing to give way. The German is, above all, a theorist. Unlike the opportunist Englishman, who lives from hand to mouth, doing the work that comes to hand and leaving its justification to accident, the German is never content unless he creates for himself a system of philosophy which may explain and justify his conduct. It so happened that the creators of modern Prussia and of modern Germany, Frederick the Great and Bismarck, were men who combined intellectual eminence and moral cynicism to an extraordinary degree. Modern German

history, through the teaching of Treitschke, and modern German philosophy, through the teaching of Nietzsche, is the historical and philosophical vindication of the methods of these heroes. (It is true that the 'European' Nietzsche regarded with fastidious loathing the junker Bismarck. Still Bismarck represented Nietzsche's superman in the drab world of everyday politics.) But these theorists, having based on Bismarck their ideal, failed to profit by the teaching of that shrewdest of masters. Bismarck was throughout a thorough opportunist. If he had come to believe, as he never seems actually to have believed, that world-empire was a necessity for Germany; that Great Britain lay in the way of her necessary expansion, and that, to attain this object, the sea power of Great Britain must be rivalled, if not surpassed, he would have taken good care that his policy, on the continent of Europe, furthered this aim. He would not, by a truculent and aggressive diplomacy, have thrown Russia, as well as France, into the arms of England. The rulers of modern Germany were not filled with the caution of Bismarck. They sought, under wholly different conditions, to recall the ambitions of Napoleon, being themselves wholly destitute of the Napoleonic inspiration.

The continental position of Germany might not in any way affect the British Dominions; but, when she sought—as it is now clear that she did seek—to gratify imperial ambitions overseas, the whole situation, so far as they were concerned, became wholly altered. Considering the painstaking nature of the German character and the sums freely expended upon secret service, it is astonishing how crass has often been the ignorance displayed by Germans of the facts of the contemporary history around them. Thus, having postulated that the British race

was decadent, the main evidence for which was the refusal of the British democracy to undertake the obligations of compulsory military service, they proceeded to assume that, at the first breath of danger, the whole chaotic and amorphous fabric of the British Empire would crumble to pieces. Listen to the exposition of German beliefs by an impartial American observer, Professor R. G. Usher :

‘Why should the Colonies fight for the maintenance of an empire whose existence is not of benefit to them and whose destruction could not injure them? How could they furnish England any effective assistance in a war fought in the North Sea, the Mediterranean, or the Near East? Even should they send troops or supplies so far, their population is not large enough nor their resources sufficient . . . to make such support decisive for victory. *Besides, Canada would expose herself to assault from the United States, a danger which the Germans seem to think sufficiently real to detain the Canadian regiments at home; Australia would be exposed to the Japanese, of whom the Germans think they stand in daily fear; in Africa the English confederation is exposed to the much more real danger of an attack from German East or West Africa, and, besides, is sufficiently imperilled by the disparity of numbers between the whites and the natives. Indeed, it is conceivable that in Africa the English Colonies would be in such danger from the outbreak of a war with Germany that they would be compelled in self-defence to sever their connexion with the Empire. The loyalty of the Colonies, as a whole, has been verbal, personal, a matter of sentiment, with which interests have never been allowed to clash. That it will stand the strain of real sacrifice the Germans believe highly improbable.*

So much for German prescience; but what is the final cause of such anticipations? The British democracy may or may not have been wise in refusing compulsory

military service, but that its refusal did not spring from cowardice was abundantly shown when, at the first recognition of the seriousness of the situation, recruiting went up by leaps and bounds. The organization of the self-governing Empire is no doubt unsatisfactory and illogical and can hardly be permanent; though one cannot discuss the style of architecture when the house is on fire. Nevertheless the fact remains that, under this defective system, there has grown up amongst millions of free men a temper of passionate loyalty to the Empire, as representing cherished ideals.

If, then, this war is a conflict of principles, what are the opposing ideals which so closely concern every member of the British partnership? On the one hand there is the ideal of strength, the effective, disciplined organization of a whole people working for a single object. Efficiency in war is the ultimate aim; though to secure this efficiency it is necessary also to secure the proper organization of all other resources, mental, moral and material, which make for such efficiency. It has been the wisdom of Germany to recognize that, without such adjuncts, the sword of militarism might break in the handling. By the extreme upholders of this ideal war is regarded as a good in itself, the ultimate justification of human effort. Others, more moderate, would maintain that war is not an end in itself, but merely an obstacle to be passed, on the road to power. In either case the conclusion is the same. The end justifies the means. Necessity knows no law; and, if paper obligations and the dictates of 'slave-morality' (that is, of Christian ethics) bar the way, we must hack through.

Opposed to this principle and this ideal, what is the principle and ideal for which British Imperialism is contending? (It is unfortunate to be compelled to use the

words 'Empire' and 'Imperialism', when the ideas involved are so different from those usually connected with those terms; but unfortunately their use seems inevitable.) The answer is a difficult one, because, as we have seen, the British temperament is not given to theorize, and the British Empire itself has developed in a very diverse, haphazard fashion. Perhaps the best definition for our purpose is that of the late Professor J. A. Cramb, a brilliant student, who died before he could know how true had been the forecast of the inevitableness of the coming contest between German and British ideals.

'If I were asked,' he said, 'how one could describe in a sentence the general aim of British imperialism . . . I should answer . . . to give all men within its borders an English mind; to give all who come within its sway the power to look at the things of man's life, at the past, at the future, from the standpoint of an Englishman; to diffuse within its bounds that high tolerance in religion which has marked this Empire from its foundation; that reverence yet boldness before the mysteriousness of life and death, characteristic of our great poets and our great thinkers; that love of free institutions, that pursuit of ever higher justice and a larger freedom, which, rightly or wrongly, we associate with the temper and character of our race, wherever it is dominant and secure.' 'To give all men within its bounds an English mind—that has been the purpose of our Empire in the past. He who speaks of England's greatness speaks of this. Her renown, her glory, it is this, undying, imperishable, in the strictest sense of that word. For if, in some cataclysm of nature, these islands and all that they embrace were overwhelmed and sunk in sea-oblivion, if to-morrow's sun rose upon an Englandless world, still this spirit and this purpose in other lands would fare on untouched amid the wreck.'

This language is no doubt vague. Still it possesses a



clear meaning to those who know the Empire's history. But it is with this spirit, as much as with the material resources of the Empire, that the German ideal is at war. At the present moment, whilst the mouthpieces of the German Government have no terms strong enough to express their hatred and contempt of the English national character, they cover with clumsy flattery the Americans, who represent, no less than the English, the qualities which the Germans resent. The German governing classes believe that there is no possibility of a strong, efficient government under democracy. But democracy is, of course, flesh of the flesh and bone of the bone of the English-speaking peoples throughout the world. Again, the individualism, which is everywhere the characteristic of the race—even where, as in Australasia, in some directions State-socialism prevails—is anathema to the German mind. What discipline and regulations have done alike for German knowledge and German trade, we may freely acknowledge; but let us not forget that the gain is won at the loss of much which we hold most dear.

Still, it may be said, at least in the Dominions, which do not come into immediate contact with Germany, the German spirit is not our spirit and German ideals are not ours; but may we not each continue in our respective course without necessarily coming into conflict? To this the answer is that the German ideal is not content to reign in the abstract theories of German historians and philosophers. It claims to make good its position in the active life of world-politics. Already far-seeing Americans have recognized that, were Germany to come out victorious from the present war, it would probably become necessary for the United States to alter its whole manner of living, and, by means of a strong fleet and a powerful army, to prevent the possibility of attack by

Germany. And, in this state of things, what would be the position of the British Dominions? It is improbable that Germany would desire at once to annex them as portions of her Empire. She would probably, at first, be content to put pressure to bear so that they should sever their political connexion with Great Britain; and then would attempt to obtain the monopoly of their trade by enforcing preferential treatment. Were emigration from Germany again to become necessary or expedient, the emigrants would be encouraged to go to Canada or Australasia; by which means the German element in these communities would be strengthened. Meanwhile, in various directions the emissaries of German 'culture' would be spreading their nets. Elsewhere German action might be more direct. According to the summary of his speech telegraphed to England, General Smuts has recently stated that there is evidence in the hands of the South African Union Government of German intrigues against British South Africa. It is impossible for us here to know the character of such evidence; but we all remember the exultant message which the German Kaiser dispatched on receiving the news of the foolish fiasco of the Jameson raid. It showed better than reams of commentary how close was the attention being paid by Queen Victoria's august grandson to the possibilities of trouble for the British Empire. Happily for Great Britain, 'by a certain divine good fortune' the members of the German governing classes excel in offending those whom it is their interest to conciliate. Thus, after the treaty of Vereeniging, Transvaal farmers trekked into German South-West Africa to escape the humiliation of British rule. Most of them, however, soon found their way back, recognizing that the whips of British dominion were far lighter than the scorpions of German authority. Similarly, if,

as seems probable, German ambitions looked forward to a time when a weak, nominally independent India should be under the aegis of Germany, it was obviously her policy to establish friendly relations with individual Indians. But what happened? On the punitive expedition of the concerted European Powers against the Chinese the treatment by the Germans of distinguished members of the fighting races of India was so intolerable as almost to lead to a breach of the peace. It is reported that an eminent Indian chieftain resented so deeply the slights put upon him that it was difficult for him at a later date to treat with proper civility the German Crown Prince. In going to the front, at the age of seventy, he is gratifying his feelings of personal resentment as well as those of Imperial loyalty.

But if these things have happened in the green tree, what will happen in the dry? The citizens of the British Dominions, no less than the citizens of the United States, are a proud people, not accustomed to toe the line at the command of any one. Consider them confronted with the overwhelming insolence of a Germany that had humbled their past bulwark, the sea power of Great Britain. Doubtless for Canada and Australasia, no less than for the United States, the new situation would demand a new policy, and, so far from the devil of militarism being expelled, it would invade the New World, with seven more devils in its wake. On the other hand, by championing the cause of Great Britain and by throwing the whole weight of their resources into the scale of her fortunes, the British Dominions can help to remove that mountain of militarism which we all recognize as the obstacle in the way of peaceful progress. For who, during the last fifty years, has set the pace in the headlong race of naval and military expenditure, which

has been hurrying the nations of Europe to the grim alternatives either of eventual bankruptcy or of such a dénouement as is now being enacted before our eyes? Who will dare to deny that it has been Germany which has compelled the French and British democracies to spend money on armaments which their own interests dictated that they should spend on purposes of social reform? In 1906 and 1907 the British Government sought to give an example for Germany to follow; but the only result of Great Britain slackening the pace in the matter of ship-building was that Germany increased her efforts so greatly as to make fresh exertions on the part of Great Britain inevitable. Those of us who have followed day by day the story of the devastated fields and villages of Belgium and of France will assuredly recognize that, under present conditions, the maintenance of British supremacy at sea is for us a matter of life and death. It would be out of place to enter upon a question which has been the subject of acute controversy in Canada; but at least it may be said that, if the strain upon British resources has been so great that the offer of Canadian assistance was warmly welcomed, the whole secret of that exigency lay in the action of Germany. If the British Empire holds together, and if some scheme of Imperial union is finally elaborated, doubtless the Dominions, having a voice in the decision of Imperial policy, will take their share of the liabilities of Imperial defence. But if the stronghold of militarism be once struck down, there is no reason why such a share should not be moderate and modest. If at the close of the war the Allies should be triumphant, Great Britain might well demand, as her share of the spoil, the destruction of the German super-Dreadnoughts, leaving to Germany the cruisers which are necessary for the protection of her mercantile

marine. It is by such means, rather than by the enunciation of pacifist maxims, some of them profoundly repugnant to deep-seated instincts of human nature, and all of them subject to the risk that when most needed they are most disregarded, that the British Empire may, through the blood and carnage of this war, emerge to a better day, to bring about which the Dominions, by partaking of the toil and trouble, would have done their part.

But, while the righteousness of the war may well commend itself to the consciences of peace-loving Britons throughout the Empire, on the ground that it is a war against the principles and ideals of militarism and all that militarism implies, there are special reasons why men who believe both in the supremacy of law and in the supremacy of liberty should give the cause of Great Britain their whole-hearted support. The Prime Minister has declared that we are fighting on behalf of the sanctity of the written word and of the independence of the small nations. The American Press was quick to recognize the significance of the German Chancellor's contemptuous allusion to a scrap of paper. It took at once the point that documents, such as Magna Charta and the American Constitution itself, were equally mere scraps of paper. Unless nations, no less than individuals, fulfil the obligations to which they have given their formal guarantee, public life becomes a mere scramble in a calculation of the strength of opposing forces. How little the German Chancellor realized the Anglo-Saxon reverence for the sanctity of the plighted word is shown by his late addition of the insulting suggestion that, if France had been the first to violate Belgian neutrality we should have accepted such violation with ready acquiescence. But the subjects of the British Crown in the Dominions, no less than the citizens of the United

States, know what it is to depend upon a written Constitution, and, under the subtleties of a federal system, to have the respective powers of the central and provincial authorities duly interpreted by the decisions of the Courts. They, least of any men, are likely to hear with patience flippant sneers at the sanctity of the written undertaking. Against this Anglo-Saxon principle of respect for paper guarantees Germany sets up the plea that necessity knows no law. Yes, but what necessity? It is the necessity of the mailed fist, of the strong man armed, who sees by such violation a short cut to the object aimed at. To the new religion of Odin is added the new morality that might is right. For long one hesitated to believe statements so shocking to the old-fashioned beliefs of Anglo-Saxondom. But competent observers assure us that what we deemed the morbid megalomania of incipient insanity has become the avowed creed of numbers of intelligent Germans.

‘Ye have heard how in olden times it was said, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth; but I say unto you, blessed are the valiant for they shall make the earth their throne. And ye have heard men say, blessed are the poor in spirit; but I say unto you, blessed are the great in soul and the free in spirit, for they shall enter into Valhalla. And ye have heard men say blessed are the peacemakers; but I say unto you blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called, if not the sons of Jahve, the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve.’

The Anglo-Saxon peoples may not too scrupulously live up to the ideals of their professed Christianity, and may sometimes expose themselves to the charge of hypocrisy so often made against them; but, at least, we may claim that we have not poisoned the wells of our beliefs, and that we are not prepared to give the go-by to all

that we have held to be progress by a blind reversion to the faith of a past barbarism. What a man believes, however, is a matter between him and his God. It is when belief influences action that we have a right to consider it. And, without question, the new religion has a counterpart in the field of morals which the world at large finds itself forced to observe closely. Even while encumbered to some extent by the thorns and briars of a nominal Christianity, Bismarck could say :

‘That any one should act in politics out of complaisance or from a sentiment of justice, others may expect from us, but not we from them.... Every government takes solely its own interests as the standard of its actions, however it may drape them with deductions of justice or of sentiment. . . . My belief is that no one does anything for us unless he can at the same time serve his own interests.’

But, when we come to writers such as General von Bernhardi, we find the doctrine, that morality consists in the pursuit of the interests of a dominant Germany, naked and unashamed. It is in full accordance with the state of things, as we understand it, in a world where *ἰβρις*, the insolence of man, finds its inevitable Nemesis in the Power which lures it to its doom, that German militarism, to judge it by its fruits, does not lead to a more conspicuous valour than that produced by the old-fashioned beliefs of other peoples. The German soldier has doubtless the qualities of discipline and courage necessary for his profession ; but he is certainly no braver than the Russian, the Frenchman, or the Englishman, and, when the qualities of intelligence and initiative are required, he is notably inferior to the man who has been taught to develop his own individuality and not to be a mere passive wheel in a huge machine. Still the monster of

militarism, with its god, which is but the devil of ordinary folk, and its moral creed, which to us Philistines is the negation of morality, rests on a strong foundation of laborious spadework and systematic organization, and requires for its complete overthrow equal effort and equal industry on the part of all those who believe in the opposite ideals of peace and freedom.

But, if the whole trend of the militarist movement runs directly counter to human progress as conceived by the English-speaking races throughout the globe, especially revolting to our notions was the particular manifestation of its spirit which this gospel gave at the outbreak of the war. If there was a principle dear to the heart of nineteenth-century Liberalism, it was the principle of nationality. In one sense Germany herself has done lip-service to this principle, because Pan-Germanism proclaims that all, whether they will it or no, who have Teutonic blood in their veins, shall be brought back to the fold of an enlarged Germany. Unfortunately for such pretensions, the tendency of latter-day research has been to throw serious doubts on the confident statements regarding the race question of a previous generation. Professor Sayce has pointed out that it is impossible to maintain that the English of to-day are a Teutonic people, and we may also ask how far does Prussia consist of a stock purely Teutonic. Races inevitably tend to mix; and it is on something more solid than mere race origin that ideas of nationality, if they are to bear fruit, must base their claim. A common history, common sentiments, common sufferings, a common religion, all take their share in developing the complex idea of nationality. Moreover, we know that while Germany has talked much of Pan-Germanism, she has dealt ruthlessly with the members of other races over whom she had dominion.



So hard has been the lot of the Prussian Poles under these apostles of culture and of light—their language tabooed in the schools, their lands acquired under compulsion—that they welcome the coming of the Russian Tsar, believing that some form of autonomy under the Russian autocrat would be far preferable to their present condition. Of the temper of Alsace and Lorraine it is superfluous to speak. These provinces were once German ; and yet after more than forty years of German rule they are as French in their sympathies as when they first came, after the war of 1870, under German domination.

It is unnecessary to enlarge here upon the most recent example of German respect for the principle of nationality. It is true that the German Chancellor has more than once insisted that Germany had no quarrel with the liberty and independence of Belgium. She only demanded that German troops should be allowed a free passage through Belgian soil. As, however, the inevitable result must have been that France would have claimed the same privilege, and that, in consequence, free and independent Belgium would have become the cockpit of the contending Powers in a war which was no concern of hers, what sort of liberty or independence would such a state of things have implied ?

Upon the other hand we may, without cant or boasting, claim that the British Empire has, generally speaking, encouraged the national idea in its component members. The two exceptions that will be thrown in our teeth by no means prove the contrary. The case of Ireland is too complicated and too difficult to enter upon in a brief survey, but at least it may be asserted that, whatever may have been the sins of omission or commission in England's behaviour towards Ireland, for the last forty years, at any rate, there has been no desire, on the part of either

political party in Great Britain to repress the national aspirations of the Irish, so far as they were compatible with the interests of the Empire as a whole. The trouble has been to decide whether or not particular measures were or were not open to this criticism. So also in the case of South Africa, the Dutch republics were overthrown, not because they strove for Dutch Afrikanderdom, but because, in the opinion of the majority throughout the Empire—whether that opinion was right or wrong concerns not the argument—their attitude, as guided by Kruger, forbade that position of equality for British subjects in their midst which Great Britain, as the paramount Power in South Africa, claimed to be their due. How loyally and earnestly the British Government has sought to make partnership in the Empire consistent with the legitimate aspirations of Dutch nationalism is shown by the fact that the Dutch General Botha, who commanded the Transvaal forces in the South African War, is now the loyal Prime Minister of the self-governing British South African Union. It is further shown by the fact that the South African Government is doing its part in the work of resisting German pretensions.

We can indeed confidently affirm that wherever European settlement has been possible on a large scale, the British Empire has tolerated, if not encouraged, colonial nationalism. Canadian historians, of Anglo-Saxon origin, have criticized and condemned the policy which encouraged the continuance and persistence of French customs and ideals in an English-speaking world. But whatever our opinion of such criticisms—and one may be allowed to suggest that it is not such an easy matter to uproot a historic past as some high authorities seem to imagine—at least this is clear, that the adoption of such a policy, even in the dark days of the eighteenth century, plainly

showed that British Imperialism had already recognized its aim to be unity through diversity. Difficult as it may be for the logical systematic German mind to realize, it is still the fact that different kinds of patriotism may co-exist side by side simultaneously in the same man. Thus a French Canadian may be a fervent French nationalist in his devotion to the French language, customs, and religion ; he may also be a Canadian patriot in his love for Canada as a whole. Lastly he may realize that such patriotism is not incompatible with a larger patriotism, the devotion of the British peoples throughout the world to that Empire which, however embryonic may be its form, still represents the ideal of a partnership of free communities, the greatest instrument for good which the world has ever seen. In its large tolerance of races and of methods the British system has at least laid to heart one of the divine maxims :

‘And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name ; and we forbad him because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us.’

Upon the other hand, what has been the attitude of German Imperialism towards the various currents of German nationalism which went to fill the mighty stream of a United Germany? A brilliant writer supplies the answer :

‘The Prussian deference to authority, the Prussian capacity for discipline, the Prussian concentration on material aims—these are the leading principles of the German Empire State. Foreign as they were in some respects to the other peoples of Germany, they have been accepted because of their success. The whole nation reacted against its past after the victories of 1866 and 1870, and the potent organization of the State

seized upon that reaction and stamped its character upon the new generation which has since arisen.'

'The key to practically everything intolerable in modern Germany is Prussian dominance. Bismarck fastened this Prussian autocracy, with its reactionary and militarist discipline, upon the whole German people, and gave it unassailable power over the national destiny. The German of all kinds is docile to authority; he accepts, indeed he demands, the guidance of the State. Professional Germany, literary Germany, even artistic Germany . . . caught in the reaction from national inefficiency, and dominated by the success of Prussian leadership in two wars, have taken the Prussian mould as completely as the army or bureaucracy. Even social reform is no exception; as pursued by Germany it is one of the most potent instruments of State control which Prussian policy has devised.'

'Under Prussian influence, German theories have indeed hardened into a drilled and disciplined national monomania.'

Can anything be imagined more repellent to the instincts and ideas of Anglo-Saxon democracy throughout the world?

But if these things are so, it surely follows that the present war, being one of principles and ideals, is a war with which the whole future of democracy, as conceived and worked by the Anglo-Saxon peoples, is most closely concerned; and that it is a war which, once entered upon, must be fought to a finish until the giant of militarism be brought to its knees. It would be intolerable that we should sacrifice our best and bravest; that Belgium should have suffered such unutterable horrors; that France should have been devastated, only that the old vicious circle of competing armaments should haunt us once more. We believe—and have reason for our belief—that by a supreme effort now the world may be relieved from this nightmare of unending competition. A war to end

war may well receive the approval of even the convinced pacifist.

There is one remark which may be added regarding the conditions of peace. Most people in this country would, probably, prefer that, upon the triumph of the allies, Great Britain should by her behaviour make good the claim that she had been fighting for sacred principles and not for her own aggrandisement. At the same time we must remember that the time is past when Great Britain could impose her will upon the Empire at large; and it may turn out that the interests of certain portions of the Empire may stand in the way of the restoration of some of the colonies wrested from the Germans. Thus Australia and New Zealand, which have always resented the presence of foreign flags in the Pacific, may demand that Samoa and the Bismarek Archipelago shall remain British possessions. Should this follow, we shall, no doubt, be accused of hypocrisy. We shall be told that the cause of Belgium was merely a blind, and that our real motive in entering upon war was aggrandisement. Men easily believe what they wish to believe; and so, no doubt, the charge will find a ready hearing in many quarters. None the less will it be wholly false. At the first starting of German South-West Africa the British and Cape Colony Governments no doubt took up a dog-in-the-manger attitude. But after the first Great Britain has seen the growth of German expansion without jealousy, and Herr Dernburg (the same Herr Dernburg who is now carrying on a campaign in the United States to throw on England the blame of the continuance of the war) bore witness to the assistance received by the German colonial officials from the British authorities. Whoever knows anything of the British Empire of to-day knows that what occupies the minds and energies of

statesmen and administrators is not the question of its increase, but of its development. Halfpenny newspapers may talk cheerfully of adding by a stroke of the pen German South-West and East Africa to the Empire ; but responsible officials who know the difficulties in the way may be less ready to welcome a new burden of responsibilities. Be this as it may, nothing can alter the fact that Great Britain entered upon this war with clean hands, and that she will not soil them during its continuance.

It is, one recognizes, a dangerous thing to constitute oneself judge in one's own cause. As a rule truth lies in the mean, between the extremes of rival litigants. Thus, though we know the resistance to Napoleon's aims to world-empire to have been righteous and necessary, we still recognize that Napoleon, in his assertion of the doctrine, *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, and in his promulgation of the Code that goes by his name, represented much against which the crowned heads of Europe were vainly contending. Often the deeper is our knowledge, the stronger becomes the case that can be made for the side which has failed and is therefore discredited. But there are limits to these grounds for cool-headed doubt and scepticism ; and, when the case of our adversary can be decided by his own admissions, it would be the merest pedantry to affect an attitude of uncertainty. The question of Servia does not greatly interest the ordinary Englishman ; though no one can read the British White Book without arriving at the conviction that Austria did not intend that Servia should comply with her conditions, and that the German Ambassador, at any rate, encouraged Austria in this attitude. But, when Germany proceeded to violate the neutrality of Belgium on the avowed ground that the measure was a political necessity, and that the

Germans must hack their way through, the issue became plain to the simplest understanding. Hardly and reluctantly the passions and jealousies of nations have allowed the breakwaters of international law to be erected against the waves of their onslaught. It is because the individuals and peoples of the British Empire recognize that they are fighting to maintain these bulwarks against the aggressions of a cynical militarism that, wherever the *pax Britannica* has made its home, there all men are agreed to carry to a fit conclusion a Holy War.

# WHY WE ARE AT WAR

## GREAT BRITAIN'S CASE

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